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THE MORNING NEWS

Your Source for local news in English Caya G.F. Betico Croes 111 T. 588-9517 F. 5889518.

Seasons Greetings

Aruba Birdlife Conservation launches its Aruba Bird Calendar 2013

Recently Aruba Birdlife Conservation's bird calendar 2013 was launched. This marks the fifth year of Aruba's bird wildlife calendars in a row. Every year, the foundation proposes a year's motto. 2012 was proclaimed "the year of the Shoco, the year of Wisdom." And according to the foundation's president, Greg Peterson, it was. After running a campaign for a year, the foundation was very happy to learn that the Minister responsible for Culture, Mrs. Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar, had proclaimed the Shoco an endemic subspecies of the Burrowing Owl to be a national symbol of Aruba.

Aruba Bird Calendars 2013

By Aruba Birdlife Conservation



The collage features four distinct bird species in their natural habitats. The top-left image shows a hummingbird with a vibrant red head and black body hovering over a bright pink flower. The top-right image displays four young owl chicks with large, yellow eyes and brown plumage, huddled together in a sandy nest. The bottom-left image captures two green parrots with yellow chests perched on a spiny cactus against a clear blue sky. The bottom-right image shows a frigatebird with dark feathers and a white underbelly, holding a green fish in its beak while standing on dry, scrubby ground.

Many good things are coming about, the reason why the foundation proclaims 2013 to be “the year of Going Green, the year of Nature Conservation.”

Several petitions were submitted to the government in 2012. One of the projects entails rescuing the bird sanctuary Bubaliplas adjacent to the High-rise hotel area. This is one of four of Aruba's internationally recognized Important Bird Areas. The quality of this bird sanctuary has dropped significantly to the disadvan-

tage of the birds during the past years. By turning it around into a high quality bird reserve, it could become a jewel of a green area where our guests from abroad can take a stroll and enjoy some of the nature Aruba has to offer.

In a petition submitted to the Parliament of Aruba, besides the Bubalipias, another 16 areas of the island, all very special bird micro-habitats, are requested to be saved for future generations.

Continued on page 2

US gun advocates seek deportation of Piers Morgan

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US gun rights advocates have signed a White House petition calling for British CNN host Piers Morgan to be deported for allegedly attacking the Second Amendment rights of ordinary Americans.

The outspoken former

British tabloid editor has launched something of a personal crusade for greater gun control measures in the wake of the December 14 massacre at Sandy Hook elementary in Newtown, Connecticut.

On Tuesday, Morgan held an especially contentious inter-

view with executive director of Gun Owners of America Larry Pratt, appearing to become incensed and incredulous when Pratt suggested more, not fewer, weapons as the solution.

Continued on page 2

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Aruba Birdlife Conservation launches its Aruba Bird Calendar 2013

Continued from page 1

The petition entails that these areas be added to Aruba's National Park Arikok and through such attain the status of national park, the only protected area in Aruba.

Among the 17 areas mentioned in the petition, there are 4 internationally recognized

Important Bird Areas and one Ramsar recognized wetland area. To date, neither birds in Aruba, nor such areas are protected. Aruba is on the very late side compared to other countries when it comes to nature protection. But Aruba Birdlife Conservation has high

hopes for 2013. "Preserving these areas is not only very important for the locals but will also enhance the quality of Aruba for our visiting guests, among which many bird and nature lovers.

The Aruba Birdlife Calen-

dars can be purchased at Huchada at the Certified Mega Mall on the Boulevard, Huchada Santa Cruz, Checkpoint-color at the end of our main-street in Oranjestad, K & G - Guiseppe Alders, Pastoor Hendrikstraat 100-A in San

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They cost Afls. 12,50 a piece. All funds go to the Aruba Birdlife Conservation foundation.

US gun advocates seek...

Continued from page 1

"You're an unbelievably stupid man, aren't you?" Morgan said at one point during the heated debate. "You have absolutely no coherent argument. You don't actually give a damn about the gun murder rate in America."

Following the interview, a Texas journalist posted a petition on the White House website alleging Morgan "is engaged in a hostile attack against the US Constitution by targeting the Second Amendment."

"We demand that Mr. Morgan be deported immediately for his effort to undermine the Bill of Rights and for exploiting his position as a national network television host to stage attacks against the rights of American citizens," it says.

Many Americans believe in the literal interpretation of the Second Amendment, which enshrines the "right to bear

arms" in the US constitution.

Morgan insists America can outlaw military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines without infringing on people's constitutional rights and says he has no quarrel with the Second Amendment.

Two days after the petition calling for Morgan's deportation was posted, it had already garnered more than 19,000 signatures, closing in quickly on the 25,000 required to get a response from the White House.

A defiant Morgan refused to back down from his position.

"Ironical U.S. gun rights campaign to deport me for 'attacking 2nd Amendment rights' - is my opinion not protected under 1st Amendment rights?," he posted on his Twitter feed Saturday, referring to freedom of speech provisions.

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EDITORIAL

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Another Christmas celebration is here again! We still remember the 2011 celebration as if it were yesterday! We have all gotten a year older, and perhaps even wiser. The world has changed considerably in this one year. In some ways the change was for the better and in other ways it was for the worst. The past year was filled with gloom and sadness here and in other countries around the world.

This Christmas in many ways is no different from all the other Christmases. This Christmas too is celebrated around the world because of Jesus, it is His birthday. Somebody put it very nicely and meaningfully when they said that... "Jesus is the reason for the season."

He is, indeed the only reason for our celebration. Without Jesus we have an empty and meaningless Christmas!

Jesus decided to come to earth to show us God and to reveal God's great love for mankind, yes for YOU. The music, the singing and rejoicing today is because Jesus came to bring us salvation!

Some 2000 years ago a multitude of angels and a few shepherds in an open field in ancient Jerusalem rejoiced gloriously when the angels brought the good news of the birth of Jesus. That angelic host sang praises because Jesus was born and would bring us salvation and peace. Later a group of wise men saddled their animals and made the long and dangerous journey to Bethlehem to see this newborn Jesus and bring him precious gifts.

Today, friends, we celebrate because we know what Christmas means. It is not simply a time to give and receive gifts, a time to party and get drunk, no... We celebrate Jesus! This Jesus came to change our world. He changed how we think about each other; he gave us new dignity and meaning in life. He has given mankind the power to become whatever we want to be.

Aruba is celebrating today, because we know the meaning of the season. Jesus came to forgive sins and to give us newness of life. Aruba can be a much better place to live if everyone would humble them-

selves and invite Jesus into their lives and allow him to transform our lives. We are on a slow downward trend in terms of our morals and lawlessness, and if we don't wake up and let Jesus into our lives, the slide downward will continue and Aruba will no longer be the welcome place that it is today!

We want a better Aruba; this is very possible if we focus on Jesus. Celebrate the reason for the season, Jesus, and let's make him supreme this Christmas. He came to bring us peace and joy. May His peace and joy reign in your heart this Christmas... Merry Christmas from all of us at The Morning News!

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Gobierno di Aruba



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Gobierno di Aruba conhuntamente cu MAMBO ta invita pueblo en general pa bin presencia e inauguracion di e Streetcar. Acto di inauguración lo tuma lugar **Dialuna, 24 di December 2012, pa 10.30 di mainta**, na unda e Streetcar lo hasi su prome stop inaugural entre La Linda cu Penha cu Trio Los Arubenos, Caroling Group. Tambe lo tin ambiente musical di Nico Connors, Arugaldo, Gaita Sensacionales, Grupo Sparkle, Gaita Autentico. Santa Claus tambe lo ta presente den Caya.

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El Gaucho Argentine Grill hosted a group of radio personalities for dinner and drinks, celebrating the successful conclusion of 2012. The party was given by Magic 96.5FM director Erin Croes, better known as the queen of the airways, and her business associate Jacky Erasmus.

Invitees included all DJs and news reporters, attesting to the station's exception collection of media stars and communication power, including George Winterdaal, Yeimy Yepes, David Wing, Elsa Krosendijk, and Giovanni Muller, all popular household names here, besides the equally famous Kenny Koolman, Reno Irausquin, Tendo Boekhoudt and Irving de Cuba. Also on hand to join in the fun the recently recruited talk show hosts Jacky Suttle, Tabitha Fecunda and Rona Coster, of 96.5% Pica, in addition to special invitees, family members and close friends.

The group congre-



gated in the restaurant's private room and enjoyed an ex-

clusive and private affair, savoring the restaurant's best and most juicy steaks and seafood. Director Erin Croes thanked her crew for their creativity and dedication, praising her staff for their performance this year, as they each contributed generously to the success of the station.

The party went on after-hours, at Garufa Ultra Lounge, with live music by Gibson, and lead singer Ana Para.



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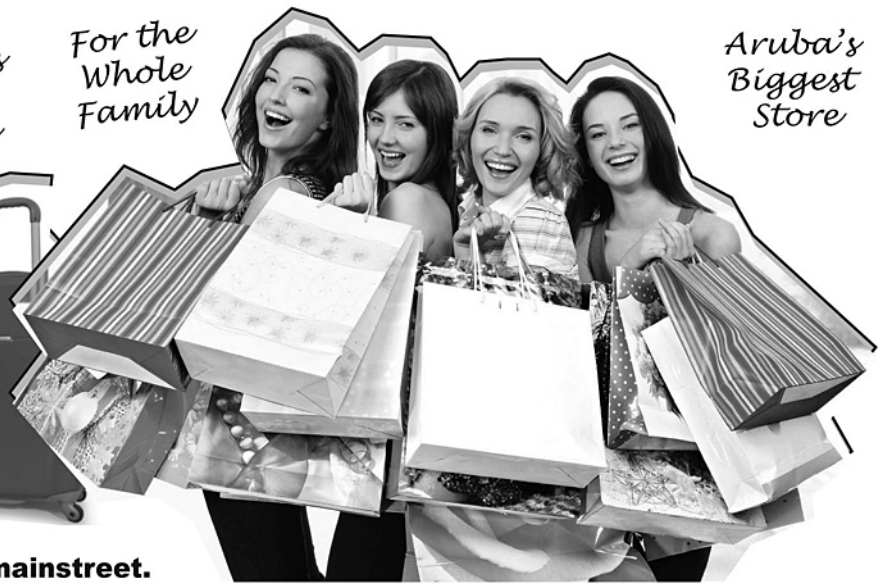
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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Cold snap claims 88 lives in Russia

MOSCOW (AFP) - A deadly cold snap has claimed 88 lives across Russia, officials said yesterday, as Moscow authorities told schoolchildren they could stay home to avoid the frigid temperatures.

Temperatures across the capital region dropped to almost minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit) overnight.

Aside from the 88 people who have perished, another 538 people needed hospital treatment, Russian news agency Ria Novosti said, citing a medical source.

An official with Moscow's education department said that younger children could stay home today.

Russia has been in the grips of an intense and unseasonable chill for the past 10 days or so. Temperatures have fallen to below minus 50 Celsius in eastern Siberia, and minus 20 in Moscow. The temperatures are 12 degrees lower than seasonal norms, with such chills not normally arriving until January or February.

The vicious cold snap has also claimed lives across eastern Europe.

US lobby issues point-blank 'no' on gun control

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The NRA, the most powerful gun lobby in the United States, ruled out any support yesterday for greater regulation of firearms or ammunition magazines after the Sandy Hook elementary school massacre.

Wayne LaPierre, the executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, said planned legislation to outlaw military-style assault weapons and large-capacity magazines was "phony" and would not work.

He repeated the NRA's call to place an armed guard in every school and argued that prosecuting criminals and fixing the mental health system, rather than gun control, were the solutions to America's mass shooting epidemic.

On December 14, a disturbed local man, 20-year-old Adam Lanza, killed his mother in their Newtown, Connecticut home before embarking on a horrific spree at a local elementary school. He burst into Sandy Hook elementary and shot dead 20 six- and seven-year old children and six adults with a military-style assault rifle before taking his own life with a handgun as police closed in.

The bloodshed reopened a national debate on gun laws.

President Barack Obama said he would support a new bill to ban assault rifles and put Vice President Joe Biden in charge of a panel looking at a wide range of other measures, from school security to mental health.

Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein has pledged to table a bill on January 3 that would ban at least 100 military-style semi-automatic assault weapons, and would curb the transfer, importation and the possession of such arms.

"I think that is a phony piece of legislation, and I do not believe it will pass for this reason," LaPierre told NBC's "Meet the Press." "It is all built on lies that have been found out. We don't think it works and we're not going to support it."

The NRA points to the fact that the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School, when 12 kids and a teacher were gunned down by two senior students, occurred despite similar legislation being in force at the time.

"I don't think it will work. I keep saying it, and you just won't accept it: it's not going to work, it hasn't worked. Dianne Feinstein had her previous ban and Columbine occurred," LaPierre said.

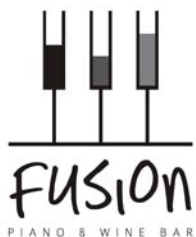
There were an estimated 310 million non-military firearms in the United States in 2009, roughly one per citizen, and people in America are 20 times more likely to be killed by a gun than someone in another developed country.

The NRA has been in the crosshairs since the Sandy Hook massacre and took the unusual step on Friday of holding a press conference and speaking out on the tragedy.

But rather than come out in support of limited gun control measures, the lobby -- which retains a powerful influence over politicians, especially from rural districts where gun owners are the norm -- demanded that armed police be deployed to every school in the country.

LaPierre reaffirmed that position yesterday and launched a fierce defense of gun owners' rights, which he portrayed as being imperiled by rich folk in cities, elite politicians and a hysterical media.

"The average guy in the country values his freedom, doesn't believe the fact that he can own a gun is part of the problem and doesn't like the media and all these high-profile politicians blaming him," he said.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Travel misery as floods hit Britain

LONDON (AFP) - Heavy flooding across parts of Britain caused widespread road and rail disruption yesterday, wreaking havoc on Christmas travel plans while rescuers worked to evacuate people from the hardest-hit communities.

Torrential rains lashed parts of Britain last week, causing problems especially in south Wales, southwest England and near Aberdeen in Scotland.

The Environment Agency said rescuers helped residents of 25 flooded homes evacuate after the River Exe burst its banks in Stoke Canon in the English county of Devon. Homes were also flooded in Stonehaven, near Aberdeen.

In Umberleigh, near Barnstaple in Devon, rescue workers in a lifeboat saved a

woman who was clinging to a tree by a flooded river.

She had been swept away while trying to climb onto the roof of her car. Passers-by rescued her husband and son, who had been in the car with her.

In the county of Cornwall, next to Devon, local authorities said at least 170 homes had been affected by floods.

"We certainly haven't heard the last of the flooding stories," said Tony Conlan, a forecaster with Meteogroup. "There is no sign of settled weather on the way for at least the next week."

The bad weather disrupted rail services across Britain, with trains in Devon and Cornwall especially affected.

Flooding on roads caused additional headaches for Christmas commuters.

Somali troops free 22 hostages held almost three years

MOGADISHU (AFP) - Troops from the Somali region of Puntland yesterday rescued 22 hostages held by pirates for almost three years after their ship was seized off the Yemeni coast, the authorities said, adding that the men bore signs of torture.

The crew, from the Dubai-owned and Panamanian-flagged MV Iceberg 1 were freed after two weeks of fighting and a siege of the vessel off the coast of Somalia, the Puntland authorities said in a statement.

"Puntland government forces conducting a humanitarian rescue operation have safely rescued 22 hostages on board the MV Iceberg 1 vessel," according to the statement from the semi-autonomous northern state.

Government forces first surrounded the vessel on December 10 near the coastal village of Garaad in the Mudug region, which lies along the Indian Ocean. The 4,000-ton ship was seized in the Gulf of Aden in March 2010 with a crew of 24 people.

More than 60 dead in air strike on Syria bakery, says watchdog

BEIRUT (AFP) - More than 60 civilians were killed yesterday in a strike by Syrian regime warplanes on people queueing outside a bakery in the rebel-held town of Halfaya in the central province of Hama, a watchdog said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which had

earlier reported "dozens" killed, said the death toll could rise as at least 50 people had also been critically wounded.

The Local Coordination Committees activist group denounced "the massacre committed by regime forces," and said Halfaya was going

through a humanitarian crisis with food shortages because of the regime's siege of the area.

The LCC said dozens of people had been queueing outside the bakery after not having had any bread for several days.




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O Condominiums -- A unique community project opens its doors today for pre-construction sales

Aruba's most successful developers of secure, superior communities for both the local and visitor market, will soon break ground on what they consider their most exclusive project in 16 years of unmatched quality and service. O Condominiums is the new pet project of Cas Bon, the same people who developed the innovative Gold Coast Villas community in Malmok.

Renowned for reliable construction, developers of O Condominiums consider the boutique community will be the "jewel in the crown" of the nine projects they have successfully completed and main-

tain. It is only three stories and twenty luxurious units, of which 14 will be oceanfront, the remainder, ocean view. Sizes range from one bedroom condominiums with a bath and a half to three-bedrooms, each bedroom with its own bath, and an additional guest half/bath. The designs include a family entertainment room that will be specially fitted with electronic and Internet connections and outlets enabling a state-of-the-art-home theater.

Each apartment sports an extremely spacious 35 square meter covered terrace overlooking the sea. Windows will be double-paned and doors



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ing, which is integrated into construction. Homeowners will have input into the finishing they prefer in the kitchen and other rooms, to customize your condominium to your taste. Public amenities will include an elegant pool deck, concierge services, lounge area, BBQ station, fitness room, assigned parking, additional outside storage for bicycles and personal items, and 24-hour security. A quiet, secluded section of Eagle beach is only a few steps from the front door.

Today at 10:00 AM, O Condominiums officially opens the

doors of their sales office on-site at Eagle Beach, in a spacious plot right next to the gourmet Screaming Eagle restaurant. The project is directed towards discerning clients seeking a top quality property on Aruba in an ideal, tranquil, beachfront location. Prospective property owners will find the Cas Bon people enjoy an exceptional reputation on Aruba for excellence and reliability. Contact the sales office at 587-5300 or 732-0000 or visit their website: <http://www.o-eagle-beacharuba.com>.

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Obama tries to rescue fiscal talks for post-Christmas deal

WASHINGTON - The White House on Friday tried to rescue stalled talks on a fiscal crisis after a Republican plan imploded in Congress, but there was little headway as lawmakers and President Barack Obama abandoned Washington for Christmas.

In remarks before flying to Hawaii for a break, Obama suggested reaching a short-term deal on taxes and extending unemployment insurance to avoid the worst effects of the "fiscal cliff" on ordinary Americans at the start of the New Year.

"We've only got 10 days to do it. So I hope that every member of Congress is thinking about that. Nobody can get 100 percent of what they want," said Obama.

Obama said he wanted to sign legislation extending Bush-era tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans in the coming days.

The Democrat appeared to be offering bickering lawmakers a way to fix the most pressing challenge - tax cuts that expire soon - while leaving thorny topics such as automatic spending cuts or extending the debt ceiling for later.

Obama called on lawmakers to use the holiday break to cool off frayed nerves, "drink some eggnog, have some Christmas cookies, sing some Christmas carols," and come back next week ready to make a deal.

If there is no agreement, taxes would go up on all

Americans and hundreds of billions of dollars in automatic government spending cuts would kick in next month - actions that could plunge the U.S. economy back into recession.

Before his defeat in Congress, Boehner had extracted a compromise from Obama to raise taxes on Americans making more than \$400,000 a year, instead of the president's preference of those with income of \$250,000 a year.

But with talks stalled on the level of spending cuts to which Obama would agree, Boehner attempted a backup plan to raise taxes only on those making more than \$1 million a year - amounting to just 0.18 percent of Americans.

Dock workers prepare for strike

SAVANNAH -- U.S. dockworkers at ports along the East and Gulf Coast will likely go on strike next weekend as contract negotiations have deteriorated, officials say.

Contract negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association and the U.S. Maritime Alliance, which represents shipping interests and management at 14 ports from Boston to Houston, broke down Tuesday, the Savannah (Ga.) Morning News reported.

With no meetings between the two parties scheduled before Saturday, when current contracts expire, a dockworkers strike looks likely, officials say.

A strike would disrupt the delivery of everything from retail goods and food items to manufacturing parts.



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FINANCE

Chairman: UBS tightening controls after Libor scandal

GENEVA (AFP) - Swiss banking giant UBS, hit with massive fines for manipulating global interest rates, has learned its lesson and is improving its control mechanisms, its chairman Axel Weber insisted in an interview published yesterday.

"We must learn from this crisis and avoid further damage to the bank," Weber told the Blick in a joint interview with UBS chief executive Sergio Ermotti. "We are in the process of improving the control systems."

His comments came as a separate report charged that UBS had not only manipulated global interest rates, but had also tampered with Swiss franc interest rates for more than a decade.

UBS did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

US, British and Swiss authorities last week hit Switzerland's largest bank with \$1.5 billion in fines -- the second-largest banking penalty ever -- for massive misconduct in the setting of the Libor rate.

That rate is used as a benchmark for global financial contracts worth about \$300 trillion and affects financial products worldwide such as student loans and mortgages.

Both Weber and Ermotti stressed in yesterday's interview that Swiss investigators

had found no indication top UBS executives were aware of the misconduct.

But Weber acknowledged that responsibility for the Libor scandal lay "not only with the people who committed crimes, but also with those who were tasked with supervising them," noting that people not directly involved in manipulating rates had also been fired.

The French-language daily Le Matin meanwhile reported in its Sunday edition that UBS had not only contributed to manipulating global interest rates on the dollar, the British pound and the yen.

It also "systematically played with interest rates on the Swiss franc. And that for more than 10 years," Le Matin reported.

Quoting findings in a US justice department probe, the paper said there was evidence that UBS traders had manipulated the rates from 2001.

The paper criticised Switzerland's financial regulator FINMA for not looking further back than 2007 when it calculated UBS's misdeeds in Switzerland, and also lambasted the Swiss national bank for not releasing numbers on how much the bank had cost the Swiss economy.

The Swiss portion of the bank's massive fine amounted to just 59 million Swiss francs (\$64 million).

THURSDAY'S Crossword Answer

IRENE OVER CHAT
FIRSTPLACE TIRE
EDO TOLL CHORES
ALTO STAND
AISLE WEE NEWEL
GREASE LARK OLA
LACE GRIME TRIS
ONO BOOT SCALDS
WINCE NEB RODEO
DRAMA ARES
COHERE ETAS GOB
AMAS SIXTHSENSE
VENT TAIL ERASE
ENDS ANTE SATAN

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Revealed: secrets of ancient Chinese medicinal herb



Blue Evergreen Hydrangea

PARIS (AFP) - Scientist in the United States on Sunday offered a molecular-level explanation for how a Chinese herbal medicine used for more than 2,000 years tackles fever and eases malaria.

The herb is an extract of the root of a flowering plant called blue evergreen hydrangea, known in Chinese as chang shan and in Latin as *Dichroa febrifuga* Lour.

Chang shan's use dates back to the Han dynasty of 206 BC to 220 AD, according to ancient documents recording Chinese oral traditions.

In 2009, researchers made insights into its active ingredient, febrifuginone, which can be pharmaceutically made as a molecule called halofuginone.

They found that halofuginone prevented production of rogue Th17 immune cells which attack healthy cells, causing inflammation that leads to fever.

A study published in the journal *Nature* on Sunday found halofuginone works by hampering production of pro-

assemble a protein bit by bit, in line with the DNA code written in the gene.

As for malaria, halofuginone appears to interfere with the same protein-assembly process that enables malaria parasites to live in the blood, the study said.

"Our new results solved a mystery that has puzzled people about the mechanism that has been used to treat fever from a malaria infection going back probably 2,000 years or more," said Paul Schimmel, who headed the team at the Scripps Research Institute in California.

Halofuginone has been tested in small-scale human trials to treat cancer and muscular dystrophy. Drug engineers also eye it as a potential tool for combatting inflammatory bowel disease and rheumatoid arthritis, which are also autoimmune diseases.

'Hobbit' slays competition for second weekend in a

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Hordes of North American moviegoers flocked to theaters to watch "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey," launching the "Lord of the Rings" prequel to box office gold for the second weekend in a row.

Industry estimates said "The Hobbit" earned \$36.7 million Friday to Sunday.

In its opening weekend, the film scored \$84.6 million in the US and Canada, and \$138.2 million internationally, for an estimated global total of \$223 million, according to New Line Cinema, which said it was the biggest opening for any "Lord of the Rings" film.

Box office watchers said it was the biggest December opening in motion picture history.

The epic stars Martin Freeman of British TV's "Sherlock" fame and Ian McKellen, reprising his role as Gandalf the Grey. It was directed by Peter Jackson based on the classic fantasy

novels by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Well behind in second place was newcomer "Jack Reacher," a crime drama featuring Tom Cruise investigating fictional shootings by a trained military sniper.

The film opened with a \$15.6 million take at the box office, according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Judd Apatow's comedy "This is 40," billed as "a sort-of sequel" to the 2007 film "Knocked Up," debuted in third position, taking in \$12 million.

That pushed "Rise of the Guardians," a Dreamworks holiday confection featuring Jack Frost, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman and a tattooed Russian Santa Claus, into fourth place with \$5.9 million.

"Lincoln" -- starring Daniel Day-Lewis as the 16th US president -- picked up \$5.6 million, good for fifth place. The film got a bump after earning seven Golden Globe nominations earlier this month, the most of any film this year.



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William and Kate snub queen for Middletons at Christmas



LONDON (AFP) - Prince William and his pregnant wife Catherine will spend Christmas Day at her parents' family house, instead of with Queen Elizabeth II, British royal officials said Saturday.

The second-in-line to the throne and the former Kate Middleton will be at the Middleton residence in Bucklebury, a village west of London, a spokesman for St James's Palace said.

"The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge will spend Christmas Day privately with the Middleton family," the spokesman said, using the official titles given to the couple after they married in April 2011.

They plan to visit the queen's Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, eastern England, later in the festive season, the palace said. The monarch and her husband Prince Philip

were understood to have approved the couple's decision.

The Cambridges spent Christmas at Sandringham last year, at a time when Philip was in hospital after undergoing a heart procedure.

It will be the first Christmas since William and Catherine, both 30, announced that they are expecting their first child together.

Catherine spent several days in hospital in London earlier this month with severe morning sickness.

Her father Michael and mother Carole, who run a party supplies business, and her sister Pippa and brother James are all expected to be spending Christmas with Catherine and William.

Pippa -- who became famous for the figure-hugging dress she wore at the royal wedding -- said recently that her father Michael often donned fancy dress for Christmas.

Rolling Stone Wood weds for third time

LONDON (AFP) - The Rolling Stones' guitarist Ronnie Wood has married his

girlfriend of eight months, a theatre producer 31 years his junior, newspapers said Sat-

urday.

Wood, 65, married 34-year-old Sally Humphreys at London's Dorchester Hotel, in a low-key ceremony Friday attended by best man Rod Stewart, plus Paul McCartney.

"I'm feeling great," The Sun quoted Wood as saying.

Pictures showed Humphreys in a white wedding dress with Wood dressed in a dark suit and tie with pink socks, a packet of cigarettes in his hand.

"It was excellent, so great. Brilliant," he said.

The Daily Mirror quoted Humphreys as saying: "I'm really excited. And for anyone interested, I'm wearing my mum's wedding dress."

In its editorial, The Sun

said: "The old rocker may need all his famous energy. At 34, his bride is half his age. Let's hope she shows some sympathy for the old devil."

Wood, who has played with the Stones since 1975 and has publicly battled against drug and alcohol addiction, left his second wife Jo in 2008 for a 21-year-old former cocktail waitress, Ekaterina Ivanova.

His divorce from Jo, his wife for more than 20 years and the mother of two of his children, was finalised last year.

He had previously been married to Krissy Findlay, with whom he had a son, from 1971 to 1978.



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Varela, Mama Luisa and the next generation of chefs

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They may have moved from Oranjestad to hipper new digs in Palm Beach Plaza, but the food and prices are strictly native,

One of the distinctions of Aruban cuisine is incorporating unique indigenous ingredients such as in Wild Cucumber Stew and a particular light fish chowder accompanied by the local specialties pan bati (corn meal pancake) and funchi (the local version of polenta.) Seafood main courses range from \$14 for Catch of

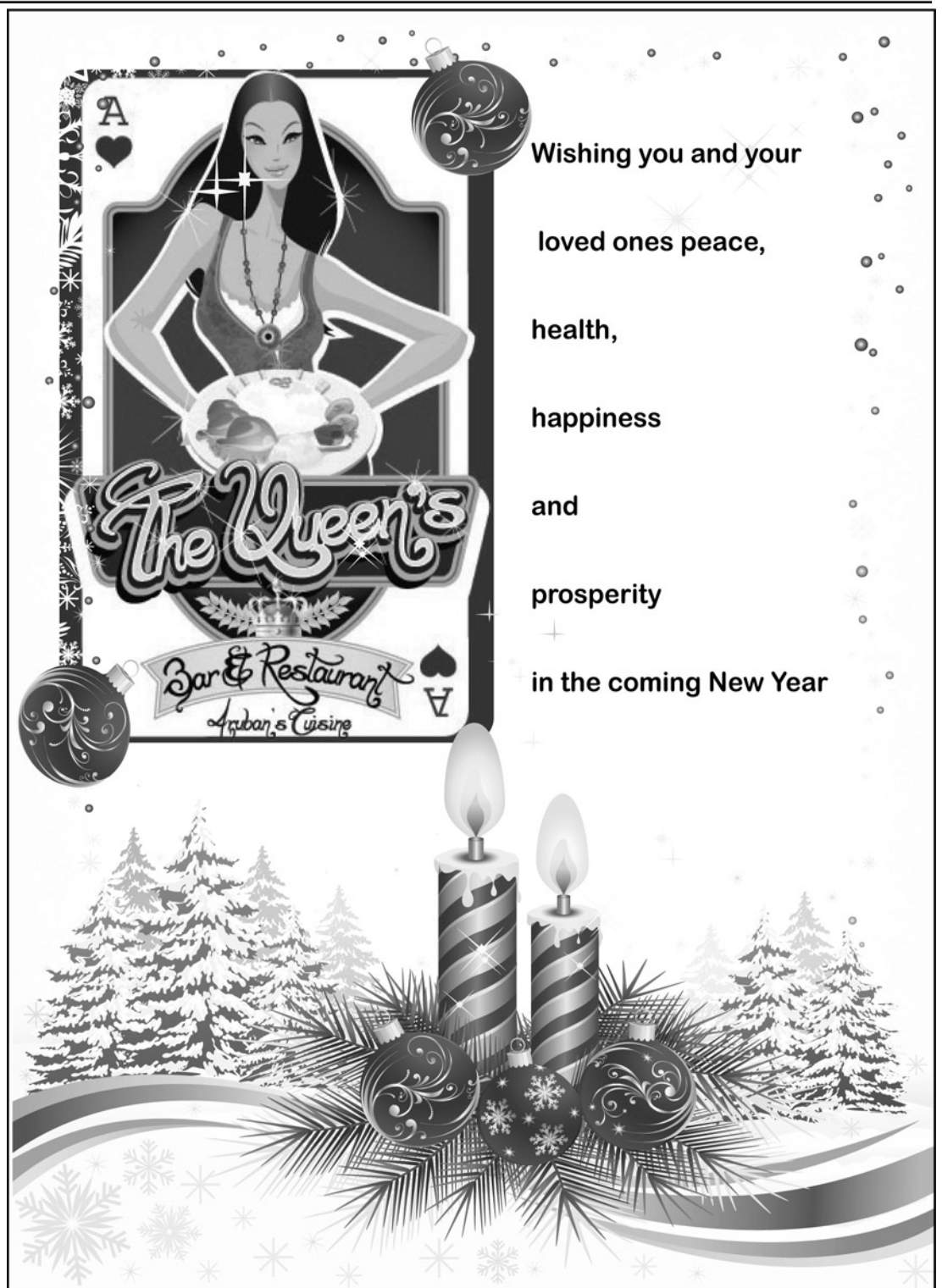


The delicious Keeshi Yena

which is what first won this charming eatery their loyal clientele. Varela's mom, Luisa, is still in the kitchen, conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations, acknowledged on the menu with items such as "Carni Stoba di Mamachi"- "Grandma's Beef Stew," and their Arawak Steak, along with local delicacies like Keshi Yena - "Full Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It was very satisfying and particularly memorable paired with The Queen's garlic bread and very special Pica, a mix of chopped onions and the famous local hot pepper, Madame Janette. Not overly spicy, it lends that perfect bit of tang to this deliciously picturesque meal.

the Day Aruban Style to \$18 for shrimp and \$20 for a mixed seafood platter with shrimp, fish, squid, scallops and mussels. Meat dishes such as BBQ Chicken and Ribs or Grilled Tenderloin range from \$12 to \$16, each including a choice of 2 side dishes; all quite yummy and bargain-priced to boot!

The Queen's is located on the second level of Palm Beach Plaza, tucked into a cozy corner at the front of the mall. If you have a mind to try the real deal in Aruban food, without a doubt, this is the way to truly eat like a local. They are open from 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM, daily, offering indoor and outdoor dining. Aside from an extensive menu they also have daily specials made from whatever is in season and Mama Luisa is in the mood to prepare, so don't forget to ask about what isn't on the menu!



With Gladness and Glue

By Nancy B. Gibbs

While Christmas shopping in a jewelry store, I discovered a clearance table of gilded ornaments. Detailed and delicate in design, each had a personality all its own. I sorted among the hundreds of filigreed masterpieces, picked out a few and took them home.

Deciding they were much too pretty to disappear among the clutter of a Christmas tree, I used them instead to decorate small eight-inch wreaths. When I stood back to admire my handiwork, a thought crossed my mind: Wouldn't some of our family and friends like these, too?

I raced back to the jewelry store to discover that the stack of ornaments had been reduced even further. This time I bought dozens as I thought of the many people who might enjoy one for the holidays.

Armed with a glue gun and

bright ribbons of every color, I eagerly began my creative project. The wreaths multiplied like measles and dotted every flat surface in our house. For days, my family tiptoed around, elbowed their way through and slept among



the miniature masterpieces.

While I tied dainty bows and glued golden ornaments, my mind wandered to Christmases past, and I pondered how special each had been. I thought about others perhaps not so fortunate. Some people in our community didn't have a family to share the joy of Christmas. Some didn't bother with holiday decora-

tions. Some never left their homes to celebrate the season.

I nodded my head in determined satisfaction. They would be at the top of my list to receive a little wreath. My husband joined me in the plan, and we set out together to put it into action.

We visited the aged. We visited the widowed. We visited the lonely. Each one was thrilled with our cheery stops and immediately hung our small gifts - often the only signs of celebration in their homes.

After several days, I realized we had made and given almost two hundred wreaths. Decorated with love and delivered with delight, they filled many homes and hearts with the joy of Christmas.

And I came to the simple realization that we were actually the ones who received the greatest blessing that year. We had found our Christmas spirit in the doing.



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Nash's triumphant return brings hope for Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Steve Nash made a triumphant NBA return for the

Los Angeles Lakers and now the perennial contenders hope they can finally live up to pre-season expectations as a championship threat.

Nash scored 12 points and passed out nine assists in 41 minutes on the court as the Lakers defeated host Golden State 118-115 in over-time on Saturday. He had missed the previous 24 games with a broken left leg.

"To play 40 minutes after seven weeks was more than I could ask for," Nash said. "I'll have to keep working on it. I know it will be sore and painful but I'm used to that."

Kobe Bryant scored 34 points to lead the Lakers, who improved to 13-14 with their fourth victory in a row. It was Bryant's eight game in a row with at least 30 points and the 400th such game of his career.

"Steve likes to pass. I like to shoot," Bryant said.

The Lakers have also welcomed back Spanish power forward Pau Gasol, who missed eight games with tendinitis in his knees.

Bengals clinch playoff spot, edge Steelers 13-10



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) is sacked by Cincinnati Bengals defensive tackle Geno Atkins in the first quarter of their NFL football game on Sunday, Dec. 23, 2012, in Pittsburgh. Bengals went on to win the match 13-10.

British paper sues Armstrong over libel payment

LONDON (AFP) - British newspaper The Sunday Times said on Sunday that it is suing Lance Armstrong for over £1 million (\$1.6 million, 1.2 million euros) over a libel payment made to the disgraced cyclist in 2006.

The newspaper paid Armstrong £300,000 to settle a libel case after previously suggesting that he may have cheated.

But the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA)

subsequently found that he had led the "most sophisticated" doping programme in sporting history, leading to a life ban for the Texan, who was also stripped of his seven Tour de France wins.

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Axed Casillas vows to prove Mourinho wrong



MADRID (AFP) - Real Madrid captain Iker Casillas vowed Sunday to prove Jose Mourinho was wrong to drop him from the Real Madrid starting line-up for the first time in 10 years.

World Cup winner Casillas was benched for Saturday's 3-2 defeat at Malaga with 25-year-old understudy Antonio Adan stepping into the breach.

"I'm not used to being a backup, but above all I am a team player. The thing to do is to keep training and try to regain my place," Casillas told La Sexta television.

"Mourinho didn't say anything during the week, but we abide by the decision of the coach. I am feeling good, but the one who decides is the coach and I have to keep training to regain his confidence. We have a healthy competition for all the places."

Mourinho, whose champions are 16 points behind leaders Barcelona, continued to insist on Sunday that he had been right to drop Casillas.

"I have a clear conscience. I try to have the best team for each match," said the coach on arriving in Lisbon where he will spend the Christmas vacation.

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Ferguson rages, while eight-goal Chelsea go third

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson fumed that Swansea City defender Ashley Williams could have killed Robin van Persie on Sunday, on a day that saw Chelsea crush Aston Villa 8-0 to climb to third.

Williams struck the prone van Persie in the back of the head with the ball during the second half of a 1-1 draw at the Liberty Stadium, sparking a furious reaction from the Dutchman that culminated in bookings for both players.

Swansea top scorer Michu had earlier cancelled out Patrice Evra's opener for

United to prevent Ferguson's men from restoring their six-point advantage over second-place Manchester City at the Premier League summit.

"Robin van Persie is lucky to be alive," said Ferguson.

"It was a disgraceful act from their player today and he should be banned by the FA (Football Association). Robin could have had a broken neck.

"It was one of the most dangerous things I've seen on a football pitch in many, many years. It was absolutely deliberate, and right in front of the referee."

Williams claimed it had been an accident, telling Sky

Sports: "I just cleared the ball with frustration and unfortunately it hit him in the head and he got a bit angry about it."

Swansea threatened first in the match, Michu firing off-target after out-pacing the returning Nemanja Vidic, before Wayne Rooney and Ashley Young tested fit-again Swansea goalkeeper Michel Vorm at the other end.

United took the lead in the 16th minute, with Evra getting in front of his marker to dispatch van Persie's corner and claim his third goal -- all headers -- of the season.

Michu headed over from Nathan Dyer's cross, but it did not take long for the

Spaniard to find the net.

In the 29th minute, Wayne Routledge's cute pass freed Jonathan de Guzman and when his shot was parried by David de Gea, Michu followed up from close range to claim his 13th league goal of the campaign.

It was United's first draw of the season in all competitions and leaves them four points above City ahead of the home game with Newcastle United on Wednesday.

Later in the day, Frank Lampard marked his 500th Premier League start with a sweetly struck goal as Chelsea annihilated Villa 8-0 at Stamford Bridge.

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